

Comptroller audit of Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority

HB 943 by S. Turner (Gallegos)

DIGEST:	HB 943 would have allowed the state comptroller to initiate a performance audit of the Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to determine whether the authority is accomplishing the purposes for which it was created. The comptroller would have been required to initiate such an audit at the request of the governor, speaker of the House and lieutenant governor or the presiding officer of a legislative committee responsible for approving legislation governing the authority. The comptroller could not have conducted a performance audit more often than once every two years.
GOVERNOR'S REASON FOR VETO:	"House Bill 943 is unnecessary as the governor currently has the power to direct the comptroller to conduct an audit in relation to public funds. In addition, the metropolitan authorities themselves may contract with the comptroller for auditing services under existing law."
RESPONSE:	Rep. Sylvester Turner, the author of HB 943, said: "While I respect the authority of the governor and his intentions, the stated reason for the veto misses an essential point behind the bill. A number of Harris County legislators agree that the Houston MTA's present spending policies are not in accord with the intent of the legislation which allowed creation of the agency. This bill would have allowed the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House, or the appropriate legislative committee chairman, as well as the governor, to request an audit to deal with that issue. The bill would have called for a performance audit of Metro whether it wanted one or not. Without the bill, it is highly improbable that Metro would contract with the comptroller for a performance audit."
NOTES:	HB 943 was analyzed in Part One of the April 24 <i>Daily Floor Report</i> .